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CRAZY NELL,

A Ballad :

AND OTHER POEMS.

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A Ballad;

AND OTHER POEMS:

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO

Miss May L. Goldsborough

— BY HER FRIEND, —

MARY E. EWER.

...

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CRAZY NELL.

THE TOWN-FOLK know my little hut:
They call me "Crazy Nell;"
And oft they send their friends to hear
The tale I have to tell.

II.

Well, well; 'tis many a weary year,
Full fifty or more I ween —
But pray take seats; for the town's afar,
And the way is rough between.

III.

Full fifty years, or more perhaps,
I've risen at sunrise,
And mounted yonder ragged rock,
To watch the sea and skies.

IV.

I'm here all seasons, warm and cold;
I wander far and near;
I'm often out at dead of night;
Yet nothing do I fear.

V.

You see these white and hoary locks ?
They once were long and dark;
And I was then a lightsome maid,
As happy as a lark.

VI.

I dwelt with my old father
Not very far from town,
And two young hardy brothers,
With hands and faces brown.

VII.

I was their pet and darling;
And often they would say,
" We'll work and labor for her,
And she'll be rich some day."

VIII.

My face was soft and lily white;
My hair was long and brown;
And not a prettier, bonnier lass
Lived in the little town.

IX.

The little town, the ocean here,
And yonder woods you see,
The sandy beach, the fields and lanes,
Were all the world to me.

X.

I was a dreamy maiden,
Good, pure, and free from care;
And oft I'd sit alone and build
My castles in the air.

XI.

Sometimes when tired of playing,
Down on the beach I'd lie,
To watch the tall and stately ships,
As fast they glided by.

XII.

I grew as a little violet springs
From its soft and mossy bed,
With heart as simple as itself,
With love and kindness bred.

XIII.

One day a dreadful storm arose,
With driving sleet and roar,
And a lordly ship from foreign lands,
Took refuge at our shore.

XIV.

Both young and old did beckoning wave,
And shout with cheerful noise,
And soon our little town was filled
With brave young sailor boys.

XV.

And when in each small humble house
The homely board was spread,
With welcome voices did we call
Them in to share our bread.

XVI.

And when the sun was long gone down,
Around each hearth was spent
Much time in talk and gossiping
Upon the great event.

XVII.

And soon 'twas whispered round about—
From ear to ear it ran,—
That on the stately ship there was
A fair young nobleman;

XVIII.

That he was from a far-off shore,
A graceful, princely lad;
That he was tall and beautiful,
In costly garment clad.

XIX.

And then in silent secrecy
Each foolish maiden sly,
With blushing cheeks, adorned herself,
Lest he should pass her by.

XX.

They all appeared in fest-day garb,
Their kerchiefs tied with care;
And each young bashful maiden sought
To make herself most fair.

XXI.

I dreamed and wondered silently,
And oft I'd stretch my neck
And look if he might be perchance
Pacing the ship's high deck.

XXII.

One day 'twas hot and sultry,
 The sky was blue and clear,
 And just before the setting sun,
 Thus spoke my father dear:

XXIII.

"Lassie, I'm tired and weary,
 My tongue is parched and dry;
 Fetch me some water from the brook
 That runs in the wood hard by.

XXIV.

"And take the old carved jug, my lass,—
 And use it with great care:
 'Twas one my grandsire used to own,
 And it is rich and rare.

XXV.

"And do not loiter on the road,
 For the sun goes early down,
 The way is dark and lonely,
 And the brook is far from town."

XXVI.

An innocent, happy lass was I,
 As I merrily tripped along,
 Watching the sky above my head,
 And singing my woodland song :

XXVII.

"To the woods, to the woods, to the woods
 I go :
 Where the birds sing loud, and the breezes
 blow,
 Where the cooling brook doth always flow;
 To the woods, to the woods I go."

XXVIII.

My willing feet soon reached the grove
Of trees both young and old,
And very soon my jug was filled
With water pure and cold.

XXIX.

I sat me down upon a rock
Close by the running brook ;
Here oft I dreamed my time away,
For 'twas my favorite nook.

XXX.

It was a sweet, sequestered place,
This little dell of mine;
You'll find it now the same as then,
Unchanged by hastening time.

XXXI.

A willow tree o'ershadowed me,
And the little birds on high
Chirped loud, as if to say they knew
When Nell was sitting nigh.

XXXII.

I sat in dreamy silence,
When I heard a step anear;
And trembling, I turned about,
With strange and sudden fear.

XXXIII.

My heart beat loud, and quickly,
And I started to my feet,
For a stranger stood before me,
Whose eyes I dared not meet.

XXXIV.

A wondrous visage had he,
That I ne'er had seen before,
And something told me that he was
The lad from foreign shore.

XXXV.

His hair was brown and waving,
His eyes were heavenly blue,
His face and hands were soft and white,
His clothes the richest hue.

XXXVI.

You see, my friends, a high-born lad
My eyes had never seen;
And Oh ! thought I, a greater man
Ne'er stood before a queen.

XXXVII.

I thought of tales I had often read
Of princes and lovers true;
I fancied a knight from fairyland
Had suddenly come to view.

XXXVIII.

I was awed, yet greatly pleased :
And my face was tinged with pink
When I heard his soft yet manly voice,
"Sweet maiden, let me drink ?

XXXIX.

"In rambling, I my way have lost;
I've walked from morn till now,
And no refreshing breezes came
To cool my heated brow.

XL.

“And thankful was I when I heard
This little brooklet run,
For long I’ve wandered searchingly
Beneath the sultry sun.

XLI.

“The roads were hot and dusty,
The way was hard to find;
I’ll take thy jug to drink from,
If thou wilt be so kind?”

XLII.

His kerchief from his neck he loosed,—
Methinks I see him now,
As he dipped it in the water
To cool his heated brow.

XLIII.

And soon his parched and fevered lips
Were wet with water cold,
And wonderingly he gazed upon
The jug, so odd and old.

XLIV.

And then to me he spake again:
“Nay, hold thy head not down,
But show me, pretty maiden,
The nearest way to town.

XLV.

“And let us hasten, little maid;
The sun has set I fear,
The twilight shadows deepen,
And the woods grow dark and drear.”

XLVI.

So side by side together
We walked, and tarried not
Until we reached the garden
Before our little cot.

XLVII.

Then came my dear old father,
And spoke in cheerful tone,
"Right welcome, welcome, stranger,
To this my humble home.

XLVIII.

"And wilt thou kindly come within
And sup with us to-night?
'Tis growing dark, and later
The moon will give thee light."

XLIX.

And so he stayed; and oft his eyes
Were fixed upon my face—
Ah! friends, the memory of that night
Long years can ne'r erase.

L.

And many times he visited
Our humble little home;
And oft we walked together,
Through the shady woods alone.

LI.

Friends, he was great and gentle;
He stole my heart away:
He came into my dreams by night,
And in my thought by day.

LII.

One day, while in the little wood,
Just at the setting sun,
We paused beside the brooklet's bank,
To hear the water run.

LIII.

'Twas then he said he loved me !
His words were wild and few;
And my bounding heart responded
To his accents strange and new.

LIV.

He took my hand within his own,
His voice was low and sweet;
With bent head, tremblingly, I stood—
His eyes I dared not meet.

LV.

And then we hastened to the beach,
And sat upon the sand;
With loving eyes he gazed on me,
And pressed my trembling hand.

LVI.

Oh ! those were dreamy, happy times,—
Those with my lover true:
The short days seemed like hours,
The hours like minutes flew.

LVII.

But cruel, cruel time will go,
Like birds upon the wing;
Will fly away with happiness,
And grief and sorrow bring.

LVIII.

It was a dark and dreary day,
The fog rolled in apace;
He whom I loved was with me,
But gloomy was his face.

LIX.

His brow was clouded over,
Like the sky above his head;
And my quickly beating heart was filled
With silent fear, and dread.

LX.

At last, in gentle words he spoke,—
But strange and hoarse his tone,
When he told me that he must away,
Back to his foreign home.

LXI.

“Yes, lassie, I must soon away;
But I will come again;
It may look drear to thee, maid,
But here thou must remain.

LXII.

“And, lassie, see you yon high rock
That towers above the sea?
When weeks and months, and years, have
passed,
Sit there, and watch for me.

LXIII.

“And then I’ll take thee with me
Back to the foreign shore,
And thou shalt there see wonders
Thou ne’er hast seen before.”

LXIV.

He talked to me of palaces,
Of velvets I should wear,
And that around my neck should hang
A string of jewels rare.

LXV.

O, friends, the cruel torture
Tongue never can relate !
My loving heart had never dreamed
That such should be my fate.

LXVI.

In anguish sank I by his side,
And tight I grasped his hand,
And loud I cried, "O, leave me not !
My love from foreign land !

LXVII.

"Why leave me sad and lonely !
Why break my heart !" I cried.
"Why can't our gray-haired priest this day
Make me thy happy bride ?"

LXVIII.

And then methinks I saw a cloud
Pass o'er his manly brow,
As he said, "Nay, check thy weeping;
Let hope content thee now.

LXIX.

"I tell thee, maid, I'll come again
To make thee my own bride,
And then the deck of yonder ship
Shall see us side by side.

LXX.

"The ship must take but me alone
Back to the foreign shore;
And then in time will I return,
To see thy face once more."

LXXI.

And thus he left me, weeping;
He left me sad and pale;
And that eve, as the sun went down,
I saw his vessel sail.

LXXII.

I sat on yon high rock, friends,
To watch him out at sea:
To that he pointed, when he said,
"Sit there, and watch for me."

LXXIII.

I watched his white and fleecy sails,
Till I could see no more
Of the stately ship that bore my love
Back to the foreign shore.

LXXIV.

My heart was sad and dreary,
That once was free from care;
And my dear father never knew
That love was lurking there.

LXXV.

My face grew pale and mournful,
And I was still and staid;
Oft spoke my father anxiously,
"What ails our bonny maid?"

LXXVI.

"Where are the roses from her cheeks,
The sunlight from her brow?
Where is the light and springing step?
They all have vanished now."

LXXVII.

And as the months and years rolled by,
My lone heart lighter grew;
I thought on his promise to come again,
And I felt that he'd be true.

LXXVIII.

I ne'er forgot his loving words,
"Sit there and watch for me;"
So on yon rock each day I sat,
With face turned towards the sea.

LXXIX.

I looked on hopeful eagerness,
Looked till my eyes grew dim;
I cared not for my own heart's blood:
I cared for naught but him.

LXXX.

And when my dear old father died,
And brothers went to sea
Here to my favorite spot I came,
And built this hut you see.

LXXXI.

And every day God gives me strength—
As I have said before,
I've sat and watched for him I love,
Some fifty years or more.

LXXXII.

His face perchance is wrinkled;
His locks no doubt are gray;
But still I dearly love him,
For him alone I pray.

LXXXIII.

Sometimes I'm weary and lonely,
And my heart grows faint and sore,
But still I'm watching, watching,
For my love from foreign shore.

LXXXIV.

And when I look on yon high rock,
That towers above the sea,
I'm thinking still upon the words,
"Sit there and watch for me."

UNREQUITED LOVE.

OH ! that dull, that silent aching,
Oh ! the thoughts I dare not speak,
Oh ! that deeply rooted fire,
Let me weep, O, let me weep.

II.

Scalding tears no comfort bring,
Still the heart will anguish keep ;
Thither come, O, Dreamland Angel,
Let me sleep, O, let me sleep.

III.

Now the loved one comes before me,
Now prepares her flight to take ;
Fly away, O, Dreamland Angel,
Let me wake, O, let me wake.

IV.

Here on earth God gives not one spot,
Where I for relief can fly ;
Father of the Heavenly Kingdom,
Let me die, O, let me die.

MY BILLIE BOY AND I

'TWAS in the happy spring-time,
When young hearts dance with joy,
While sporting on the village green,
I met my Billie Boy.

II.

And when the chill winds 'gan to blow,
And autumn leaves were dead,
My manly Bill Boy and I
So happily were wed !

III.

We cared not for the chill wind,
Nor clouds that filled the sky:
Our sun was with each other,
My Billie Boy and I.

IV.

The winter sped, the snow was gone,
The winds were no more chill,
And in the merry month of May,
My Billie Boy took ill.

V.

Then anxiously I nursed him
With love and tender care,
But He that ruleth thought not fit
My Billie Boy to spare.

VI.

And so with bursting, bleeding heart,
And eyes raised up to God,
I laid my darling Billie Boy
Beneath the heavy sod.

TEARS.

COME, little sparkling drops,
To soothe my pain:
I need you, as the blooming flowers
The summer rain.

II.

Fall one by one upon my
Tight-clasped hands,
And help to loose my heart
From sorrow's bands.

III.

Through silent, crystal drops
I look above
To Him, the God of Mercy
And of Love ;

IV.

And as the prayer ascends,
And tears flow fast,
The heart finds comfort, peace
And calm at last.

LITTLE MILDRD.

WHO is it so sweetly singing,
Warbling blithe upon the stair,
Sunny smile and rosy cheek,
Eyes of blue and golden hair ?

II.

Running swiftly through the hall,
Peeping slyly through the door,
Tripping softly, ever graceful,
Fairylike across the floor ?

III.

Talking fast, with childlike gestures,
Perched upon her father's knee ;
Baby questions, simple answers ;
'Tis a picture fair to see.

VI.

Oh, my darling little Mildred !
May God bless her in this life ;
And may sorrow ne'er approach her ;—
Keep her, God, from worldly strife.

* * * * *

V.

Lying on a bed of roses,
Little hands across her breast,
White flowers scattered in profusion,
Sleeping in earth's last, long rest.

VI.

Gone the merry voice we heard
Before her heart had ceased to beat ;
Gone the patter on the staircase
Of the little baby feet.

VII.

Oh, my darling little Mildred !
Keep her, God, upon Thy Breast ;
Bid the Angels shield and guard her,
Till I lie in earth's last rest.

MY FORTUNE.

TWO loving eyes to gaze in mine ;
A manly heart to call my own ;
A face where sunsine ever dwells,
Where frowns and dark looks are unknown.

II.

Only a little cherub face,
Two little eyes of heavenly blue ;
Two little soft, white baby hands ;
Two dimpled cheeks of rosy hue.

III.

A little soul gone Heavenward,
Safe resting on the Saviour's Breast ;
Awaiting me with outstretched arms
Until I lay me down to rest.

CHRISTMAS SONG.

COME men and maidens, shout with
joy !

Hail, hail the Son of Man is born,
Within a building rough and rude,
Of Mary dear, this early morn.

II.

No pomp and glory with Him come,
No crown upon His sacred head ;
But born of lowly peasant girl,
And laid in lowliest of bed.

III.

Within the manger lies He now,
The Holy Mother o'er Him bends ;
And with a loving reverence,
The Holiest of Holies tends.

IV.

Come, gaze upon His infant face,
So full of sacred tenderness ;
He comes to free from death by sin,
To save, to sanctify, to bless.

V.

And, lo, the three Kings from the east
Come, guided by the wondrous star,
And kneel before the Holy Child,
With gold, with incense, and with myrrh.

VI.

With grateful heart and bended knee,
Come let us loud our voices raise,
With Angels hovering o'er the Babe,
In song of thanks and song of praise.

MY DARLINGS.

TWINS they were, my darlings two,
The little sisters fair,
My Mabel and my Bessie,—
A happy, loving pair.

II.

Two little flaxen, curly heads,
Four little eyes of blue,
Two little pairs of rosy cheeks,
Two natures pure and true.

III.

They only lived six summers—
A short but happy life,—
And then they left this weary world
Of many cares and strife.

IV.

First went my darling Bessie ;
And Death scarce closed her eyes,
Before my little Mabel left
This world for Paradise.

V.

Their little pure and unstained souls
Flew side by side to God ;
And we on earth their bodies laid
Beneath the heavy sod.

VI.

I've here their little playthings,
Which I hold with sacred care,
For dearer are they all to me
Than costly jewels rare.

VII.

Two little hobby-horses, which
Oft they'd mount and ride ;
Two little waxen dollies ;
Two cradles side by side ;

VIII.

Two little sewing baskets,
A doll's dress yet unmade ;
Two tiny golden thimbles
Within their cases laid ;

IX.

Two little velvet chairs, set
Beside a table small ;
Two little baby pictures,
— On which my tear-drops fall.

X.

But in the Heavenly world beyond,
They're waiting me, I know ;
They only went before me,
To greet me when I go.

LIFE.

HUSH, an infant's cry is sounding !
Grateful, happy hearts are bounding,
At the sound.

Children light on tip-toe treading,
Fast the happy news are spreading
All around.

II.

Hush, the marriage bell is ringing !
Boys in snowy vestments singing
With the bride.

Gone the hum of noise and talking ;
Happy bride and groom are walking
Side by side.

III.

Hush, the funeral bell is tolling !
Through still air its dull sounds rolling
Loud and clear.
Tears from aching hearts are springing ;
Choir the funeral hymns are singing,
Round the bier.

THE ELOPEMENT.

'TIS MIDNIGHT, and the still, cold air
Stirs not a leaf or twig on tree,
And from a stately mansion steps
A maiden, fair to see.

II.

Why flies she from her father's home ?
Why will she breathe the chill night air ?
Why seeks she thus a lonesome way,
One yet so young, so fair ?

III.

No sound is made, as, like a bird,
With noiseless step she onward hies ;
A frightened glance she casts behind,
As rapidly she flies.

IV.

Green woods and groves are passed apace ;
On, on she goes, and tarries not ;
Around her there is not a sign
Of mansion or of cot.

V.

And now she hesitates—she stops ;
She hears a sound, “ At last, at last ; ”
Her lover’s steed is now her seat,
His arms around her clasped.

A SONG OF THE WAVES.

WE MOAN, we rise, we fall,
From morn till even-tide ;
We roll on the shining golden sand,
And splash on the great ship’s side.

II.

We tear the sail from mast ;
We drown the sailor brave,
And angrily toss from side to side,
With a crest on every wave.

III.

A lad with heart on fire
We’ve lured to the mighty deep ;
And then with our rocking, and moans
and sighs,
Have lulled him in death’s long sleep.

IV.

We moan, we rise, we fall ;
We rest not night or day ;
We gambol beneath the moon and stars,
And under the sun's bright ray.

V.

One eve a prattling boy
Flew from his mother's side.
"The billows rock better than cradle at home
I'll sleep there to-night !" he cried.

VI.

"Come, infant, come," sang we,
"We'll hush thee soon to rest."
And, while we were sighing, the innocent one
Died on our heaving breast.

VII.

We played with his golden curls,
Our foam o'er his visage swept ;
And above us the wild wind sang its dirge,
While the mother wailed and wept.

VIII.

"O, cruel, cruel sea !
Why toss so high and wild,
As though thou wert glad in thy heartless
work !"
O, give me back my child !"

IX.

We moan, we rise, we fall ;
We rest not night or day ;
While the Heavens are dark above us,
Or sunbeams with us play.

ONE YEAR AGO TO-NIGHT.

I CAN see them dancing gayly
Through the ball-room's open door :
Bright and merry are the dancers,
Tripping lightly o'er the floor.

II

But the world to me is empty,
Sad my heart that once was light,—
I was gay as yonder dancers
Just one year ago to-night.

III.

I was there among the merry,
With sweet Maud upon my arm ;
And the world seemed filled with gladness,
Free from sorrow, and from harm.

IV.

Merry was the dance that evening :
Lights were burning clear and bright,
And my Maud seemed like an angel
In her robe of snowy white.

V.

Eyes that beamed like little heavens,
Snow-white hands, and face as fair ;
And the bright lights shone and sparkled
In her rippling golden hair.

VI.

But to-night in yonder graveyard
Deep she lies, my only love,
Resting in earth's last, long slumber,
While her lover mourns above.

VII.

All the world seems dark and dreary—
I may wring my hands in vain,
I may weep hot, scalding tear-drops,—
Nothing comes to soothe my pain.

VIII.

Ah, that room to me is empty,
Though 'tis filled, and lights burn bright,
Where I was among the merry,
Just one year ago to-night,

NO HOPE.

HE sits in his little room alone ;
The fire is out, the air is chill ;
The faithful clock on the mantle-shelf
Strikes the hour of midnight, and all is still.

II.

He looks at the smouldering ember-bed
With a vacant stare, and with lips blue-
white,
While through the darkened room the
moon
And stars are shedding their silver light.

III.

In one thin, fevered hand is clasped
The picture of one who is young and
fair
While in the other, lies moist and hot,
A shining curl of golden hair.

IV.

Still silent, the clock on the mantle-shelf
Again to her master gently speaks,
While the scalding tear-drops, one by one,
Roll down on his sunken, pallid cheeks.

V.

One—two—the little clock speaks again.
Slowly he lifts his heavy eyes,
Then wearily leans on the window-sill,
And peers in the diamond-studded skies.

VI.

"No hope," cry the twinkling stars above ;
"No hope," says the moon as she
floats along ;
And the cold winds stirring the tree-tops
below,
Are moaning and chanting the same sad
song.



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